

REMARKS OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ISA)
JOHN T. McNAUGHTON, AT THE ROTARY DISTRICT CONFERENCE
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I am very glad to have the opportunity to address this audience of Rotarians. I remember with great pleasure the years that I spent as a Rotarian, before I became a law professor, and then, went into the government.

Tonight I would like to talk to you about South Vietnam.

The first question is: Why are we in South Vietnam?

You heard the President speak on April 7. He explained why we are in Vietnam: First, we are there to keep a promise to the people of South Vietnam. The promise of the United States has been made by three successive Presidents -- Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. The promise, starting with President Eisenhower's letter to Vietnamese President Diem in October 1954 and continuing through President Johnson's statement at Johns Hopkins University ~~three weeks ago~~, ^{has} have been expressed often, clearly and in constant terms. It would be wrong to break that promise.

Second, we are there to strengthen world order by demonstrating to free people of the world that our word remains and will remain good. The value of the national pledge of the United States -- the credibility of that pledge, not only in Vietnam but as the President said, "from Berlin to Thailand" -- is at stake today in our undertaking behind the Government and people of South Vietnam.

Third, we are there to draw a stop-line to Asian Communist aggression. Since the end of the Second World War, the leaders of what is now North Vietnam have worked to impose a Communist state over all of Vietnam. Their further ambitions extend at least to the remaining parts of former French

Indochina -- Laos and Cambodia. Their campaign was accelerated in 1960, about the time that Ho Chi Minh announced at the Third Congress of the North Vietnamese Communist Party the necessity for North Vietnam "to step up the . . . revolution in the South." And close behind the Hanoi regime, supporting it and spurring it on in pursuit of its goals, are the leaders of Communist China. A Free World withdrawal from the challenge in the jungles and mountains of Vietnam would merely transfer the battle line to other places. How much had to be swallowed up before World War II before we learned that simple lesson?

Finally, we are there on a mission to help South Vietnam -- indeed all of the countries in the area -- to make progress through orderly change. Progress is coming and must come in this changing world. Especially the young people quite properly have great aspirations. Old social structures will be immersed in turbulence. It is for us, with our enormous talents and physical resources, to help men everywhere to find the new course without sacrificing their freedom.

Our objective in South Vietnam is straightforward and easy to state; it is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. The President has made clear that "we will do everything necessary to reach that objective, and we will do only what is absolutely necessary."

There you have our ends and guidelines.

Now, coming as I do from the Department of Defense and addressing this particular audience, I think it is appropriate for me to discuss in some detail some issues relating to our military programs in Vietnam.

Specifically, I wish to discuss the motives and implications of two